



City of Somerville

February 2021

Council on Aging News

Interim Executive Director

Ashley Speliotis, LICSW
aspeliotis@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2310

Staff

Connie Lorenti ▪
Admin/Fiscal Assistant
clorenti@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2319

Natasha Naim ▪
LICSW Social Worker
nnaim@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2317

Chris Kowaleski ▪
Health & Wellness Coordinator
ckowaleski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2315

Debby Higgins ▪
Outreach Coordinator
dhiggins@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2321

Maureen Cuff Bastardi ▪
Program Coordinator
mbastardi@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2335

Mary Marshall ▪
Nutritionist
headtofitness10@yahoo.com
617-625-6600 ext. 2316

Josephine Raczkowski ▪
Administrative Assistant
jraczkowski@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300

Judy Calvey ▪
Holland Street and
Ralph & Jenny Director
jcalvey@somervillema.gov
617-625-6600 ext. 2300



Welcome February! Here's to hoping that Punxsutawney Phil doesn't see his shadow and spring is right around the corner! Until we get to enjoy the spring sunshine and longer days, the Council on Aging has been working to expand our online programming to keep up with the demand. February is a month that centers itself around love and friendship. Valentine's day is a celebration of the love for our neighbors, friends and family.

This Valentine's day, don't forget to love yourself. Keeping your body moving is one way to tell our bodies that we care about them. Beginning in February, in addition to enjoying Yoga on the City's cable and YouTube channels, you'll be able to join the class live via Zoom. Also, back by popular demand is our Health and Wellness Jeopardy which is available by Zoom or call in.

As always, staff are available to help you with all of your computer needs, whether it's assisting you with calling in, helping to download an app to your smart phone or tablet, or even how to set up an email address. Throughout the pandemic, we have seen the many benefits of having an email address. Email helps us to connect with one another, shop online, and helps us receive important City alerts and reminders and updates about the vaccine. We are here to answer all types of computer questions or to review if you will qualify for a low-cost telephone or internet plan. While it may seem like a challenge, let the Council on Aging assist you in learning more about technology.

Here's to a healthy February,

Ashley



Social Work Corner with Natasha Naim



Embracing Change

Let's talk about change. Change can be something that we plan for and is exciting. Yet, too often, change comes upon us unexpectedly and can feel like a challenge. Unexpected change can be scary; in large part because we often have little control of when or how the change will occur. Let's focus on how we can adapt to, and embrace, changes that are both foreseen and unexpected.

Change Can Be Necessary

Change is often something that we are forced to engage in. Whether it's a change in our lifestyles, or a change in the world, often, our immediate response to unexpected change is to react negatively to it. We question: why can't things just stay the same and we may find ourselves angry at the person or organization that we feel caused the change. Yet, change is important to our growth and maintenance and while its presence can be unwelcoming, it's important to recognize that change is essential. Change is what brought seatbelts into cars and light bulbs into homes. At the time, these changes were met with skepticism, but now we accept them as part of normal life!

Embrace Change; Changes Can Have Long Lasting Positive Effects

Even if we know that change is necessary, and inevitable, the impulse to resist change can take over. The importance of embracing change has never been more relevant. As we navigate this pandemic together so many of us have adapted to the changes that are necessary to keep all of us safe. You've adapted to Zoom calls and different protocols when shopping at the grocery store. You've social distanced and found other ways to connect with loved ones. While change can feel uncomfortable in the beginning, it's important to think about the long-term positive benefits. Maybe you've reconnected with high school classmates via Zoom and been able to catch up. Maybe you've found some time to follow along with our exercise program without leaving your home. Even when so much has changed, take time to recognize that some of these changes have allowed us to improve our lives.

Address the Uncertainty of Change Head On

While some of us have found positive changes, the thought of making a change may still scare some of us; it's important ask ourselves why. Why does change frighten us? It's important to interrogate where our fears come from. Has there been a change in the past that has negatively impacted your life? Think about comparing how the change that you are focusing on in the present relates to your past negative experience with change. Is it that you were upset about the lack of control you felt? We tend to focus on the worst possible aspect, but what about focusing on the positive? It's also important to remind ourselves of past changes that brought us positive experiences, even if we didn't view them positively in the beginning. Until you embrace change, you won't know the wonderful possibilities available to you.

To *RSVP* to the below programs please call *Natasha Naim* at 617-625-6600 ext. 2317 or e-mail her at nnaim@somervillema.gov

Mental Health Awareness

Tuesday, February 9th from 11:30-12:30 the Somerville Council on Aging, in partnership with Roberta Robinson, from Cambridge Health Alliance, will be continuing our Mental Health Awareness series. Every month Roberta discusses new and interesting topics in regards to mental health.

Book Club

Friday, February 19th from 10:00 am -11:00 am

Do you love books and want to discuss your love of reading with others? Consider joining book club. Book club is now meeting online via Zoom. This month's book will be *In Praise of Difficult Woman* by Karen Karbo.

Caregiver Check-In

Are you a caregiver for a loved one and want to connect with other caregivers? Would you like to discuss the joys and challenges of caregiving? The Somerville Council on Aging is hosting a monthly check-in via Zoom for caregivers. Our next check-in will take place on **February 23rd from 11:30-12:30**.

Brown Box Distribution, February 25th

Many of us are facing food insecurities due to COVID-19. If you find yourself in need, please reach out to us! The COA can assist with applications for food stamps, our Brown Box shelf-stable food program, or connect you with a food pantry.



Nutrition with Mary Marshall



You Can Help Control Your Heart Health

You're in the driver's seat when it comes to your heart and can learn how to be heart healthy at any age. February is American Heart Month, a federally designated event and the ideal time for Americans to think about their heart health and encourage their friends, families and communities to get involved. February is a good opportunity for you to consider how you can manage chronic conditions and make heart-health eating changes. For some, that means working with your health care provider to manage conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It could also mean a focus on eating foods low in trans-fat, saturated fat, added sugar and sodium. Try to have half of your plate filled with vegetables and fruits and lower your sodium intake.

Contributing Risk Factors to our Heart Health:

High blood pressure: Millions of Americans have high blood pressure and about half don't have it under control. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is one of the largest risks for heart disease.

High blood cholesterol: High cholesterol increases the risks for heart disease. High cholesterol levels can occur with individuals who have diabetes, obesity, smoking, or unhealthy food habits.

Smoking: Over 37 million adults are smokers. Smoking damages the blood vessels and causes heart disease. If you stop smoking you can reduce your risk of heart disease. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

You can help control your heart health. Remember, you're in the driver's seat when it comes to your heart and it's never too late to learn how to be heart healthy.



Upcoming Workshops Dates:

Monday February 1st & 8th at 11:00 am
Wednesday February 3rd & 10th at 10:00 am

For more information or to sign up
email Mary at headtofitness10@yahoo.com



Chris Kowaleski, Health and Wellness

We are pleased to announce the start of our winter online **Zoom Yoga** series. Starting on **Tuesday, February 2nd at 10:00am**, the COA's yoga instructor Janine Duffy will be leading a 45 minute gentle yoga class live over Zoom. Each class will include gentle poses done from a chair or standing. The series will run on the following dates at 10:00am: **February 2nd, March 2nd and April 6th**.

We are also excited to announce the return of our online **Zoom Jeopardy Game Night!** On **Thursday, February 18th at 5:00pm**, we will be hosting an hour long Health and Wellness Jeopardy game. If you are unable to join us in February, we will also be hosting game night on March 18th and April 15th.

If you are looking to do some gentle yoga or laugh, have fun and answer Jeopardy questions, sign up for our winter yoga series or our Jeopardy game night! **For more information or to sign up for either program, contact Chris by email at ckowaleski@somervillema.gov or by phone at 617-625-6600 ext. 2315.**

Somerville Prevention Services

“Hi! We are Somerville Prevention Services with the City of Somerville’s Health and Human Services Department. We are committed to leading efforts around the prevention of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, marijuana, opioids, and other drug misuse in the City of Somerville, with a particular focus on youth prevention. Currently, we are expanding our focus to include other behavioral addictions, like problem gambling and problem gaming.

Keep an eye out for us this month on the Council on Aging’s TV show, *Senior Circuit!* Going forward, you will also be seeing us in the monthly newsletter to provide more information, facts, and resources about substance use and other behavioral addictions.

We want to make sure we answer YOUR questions so please send any questions to kvaughan@somervillema.gov and we will feature the answers in upcoming newsletters. We very much look forward to bringing our work to you in 2021!

*Matthew Mitchell, LSW, Prevention Services Manager
Kira Vaughan, LMHC, Substance Use Prevention Coordinator*

Music and Munch



Wednesday, February 10th & February 24th from 12:00 pm-1:00 pm
Join us online via Zoom or by phone to learn, sing-along, relax and enjoy
some music while you munch.

To RSVP call Debby at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or e-mail her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

February Boxed Lunch Pick-Up

February's monthly boxed lunch pick up will be held on **Friday, February 12th**
at the Ralph and Jenny Center.

While we can't share lunch together we hope you are able to drive thru to pick up a lunch.
Masks and RSVPs required; please call Connie at 617-625-6600 ext.2319 to sign up.

Virtual Bingo Day!

Tuesday, February 16th from 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Join us online or via phone to play **BINGO**.

We will supply you with the bingo cards and instructions.

Space is limited

To RSVP call Debby at 617-625-6600 ext. 2321 or e-mail her at dhiggins@somervillema.gov

February Mask Drive Thru

Wednesday, February 17th from 10:30 am-12:00 pm
Holland St Center

The COA has masks available for Somerville residents who are 60 and over. If you are in need of a mask or may know of a friend or neighbor who may need a new mask stop by our Drive-Thru.

Music and Movement

Thursday, February 18th from 10:30 am-11:30 am—Via Zoom or Call In

Join Steve as he plays guitar, sings and leads gentle movements. Just tapping your toe or singing along can help move your body in new ways.

Please RSVP to Debby at dhiggins@somervillema.gov or 617-625-6600 ext. 2321.

